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SUBJECT: UNSC GETS FIRST HAND LOOK AT DRC CHALLENGES

REF: KINSHASA 513

¶1. (SBU) Summary: UN Security Council ambassadors held meetings in Kinshasa and Goma June 7-8. Three themes emerged in their discussions in Kinshasa: democracy-building, the Goma and Nairobi processes, and sexual violence. President Kabila impressed the ambassadors with his command of issues and candid responses. In Goma, civil society members expressed their anger against the FDLR and strong disapproval of relocating FDLR members within the DRC. The visit provided the Security Council with first-hand information of the continuing challenges faced by MONUC and the GDRC. End comment.

¶2. (SBU) Seven UN Security Council ambassadors, joined by the U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo who represented the U.S., and accompanied by the Congolese ambassador to the UN, met with President Kabila, Prime Minister Gizenga, Senate President Kengo and National Assembly President Kamerhe June 7 in Kinshasa. They also held meetings the following day in Goma.

Kinshasa  
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¶3. (SBU) Three common themes emerged from the Kinshasa meetings: democracy-building, the Goma and Nairobi processes, and sexual violence. Discussion focused in particular on the challenges of decentralization and of security sector and judicial reform.

¶4. (SBU) Several members of the delegation told the Ambassador they were impressed with Kabila, especially his command of the issues and candid responses to their questions. The South African and UK ambassadors observed that Kabila appeared much more self-assured and confident than during the previous year's visit.

¶5. (SBU) Kabila told the delegation it will take two to three years to reform and train a professional Congolese military. He also provided insight into his views of normalizing diplomatic relations with Rwanda, suggesting that the first step could be the DRC opening a diplomatic office in Gisenyi followed by Rwanda opening a similar office in Goma. (Note: This mirrors a proposal put forward by Kamerhe a year ago. End note.) Kabila said that the Nairobi and Goma processes must succeed for sexual violence in the east to subside.

¶6. (SBU) Kabila noted MONUC's positive role in the DRC, characterizing its peacekeeping forces as essential in dealing with the challenges of Congolese and foreign armed groups. Kabila advocated a transition in MONUC's role to providing development assistance. He stressed that he is counting on MONUC logistical support for 2009 local elections.

Goma  
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¶7. (SBU) Following meetings with government and diplomatic

officials June 8 in Goma (reftel), most of the delegation traveled to the Mugunga IDP camp, while the Ambassador and his South African and Burkinabe colleagues met with civil society groups.

18. (SBU) After meeting with some 30 women representing women's NGOs in North Kivu, they subsequently met with 10-15 representatives of other civil society organizations. Both groups expressed anger towards the FDLR and strong opposition to relocating FDLR members anywhere in the DRC. They also articulated strong support for MONUC. In general, they said it needs more resources and should concentrate more on protecting civilians.

Comment  
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19. (SBU) Comment: Discussions during this visit provided the Security Council with a first-hand view of the challenges faced by MONUC and the GDRC as well as a better understanding of the concept of a "surge capacity" to complement MONUC's peacekeeping operations (reftel). End comment.

GARVELINK